

Canadian
Pamphlets
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HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF
Skins and Furs.

BRIEF HISTORY OF FURS & THE FUR TRADE,
THEIR STATISTICS AND USE.

COMPILED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION, WITH A
DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION
Exhibited by

MESSRS. NICHOLAY & SON,

IN

THE GREAT INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION.

INCLUDING

HINTS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF FURS.

By J. A. NICHOLAY,

CHAIRMAN FOR CLASS XVI. LOCAL COMMISSIONER FOR THE BOROUGH OF
MARYLEBONE, AND JUROR FOR TEXTILE MANUFACTURES GROUP C.

London:

82, OXFORD STREET,
NEARLY FACING THE PANTHEON.

1851.

This little work, compiled by the author, *con. amore*, has been put together, and may, it is hoped, be found useful as a book of reference when the Great Exhibition, which called it into existence, shall have ceased to exist.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN accompanied by H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT and the KING OF THE BELGIANS, visited the Exhibition by appointment June 17, 1851, for the express purpose of inspecting (in Class 16) the extensive collection of Skins and Furs, on which day Messrs. NICHOLAY & SON were commanded to be in attendance for the purpose of affording HER MAJESTY any explanation that might be required. The Seal and the Beaver especially met with the marked approbation of HER MAJESTY and PRINCE ALBERT.

To LIEUT.-COL. REID, R.E., C.B., F.R.S.

DEAR SIR,

The Exhibition has brought not only individuals but countries together in a way hitherto unknown, and the feelings of good will and amity engendered thereby, which have been so satisfactorily reciprocated by all, will be carried throughout the length and breadth of the universe, and the results cannot be foretold; even at the present time they far exceed our most sanguine expectations. To HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT *all honour* is justly due; the noble work was his, and the delighted millions unhesitatingly agree that in no other country could so glorious a consummation have been achieved. To YOU, Sir, as Chairman of the Executive Committee, and to your Colleagues in the great undertaking, much and deserved praise is justly awarded—the unexampled difficulties that you have had from time to time to contend with, and which have been surmounted in such a satisfactory manner, added to your energy, business habits, and courteous conduct has won golden opinions from all—as a tribute of respect I venture to dedicate this little manual to you, a liberty I should not have taken, had I not known that any attempt, however humble, to benefit society or diffuse knowledge, would meet with your encouragement.

I remain, Dear Sir,

Yours respectfully, &c. &c.

J. A. NICHOLAY.

82, OXFORD STREET.

IN the following pages will be found a few remarks hastily put together, for the information and assistance of the Visitors to the Exhibition, until the Official Illustrated Catalogue appears. Should the present attempt be found sufficiently interesting to cause it to be favourably received, the writer will at a future time take an opportunity of producing a more enlarged and detailed statement on the same subject.

The impulse which the formation of the Great Industrial Exhibition has necessarily produced in the minds of all persons taking an interest in the development of the human intellect, whether directed to the higher branches of erudite learning, or exerting itself in the creation and improvement of the numberless useful and necessary arts of life, has tended with a force perfectly irresistible to concentrate and collect, as it were, into one focus all that can elevate, improve and maintain the social condition of mankind. A collection of products, both natural and artificial, has been formed in an incredible short period of time, and an aggregate group of contributions has been brought from every clime to form a spectacle unparalleled in the history of the world. The following outline, containing the history, uses and statistics of an article which has always been of the utmost importance to mankind in general, has been strung together as a natural consequence of the writer having devoted throughout his life much time and pains to the illustration of Furs and the Fur trade, and to his having had a large space allotted to him in the building intended to exhibit the great mass of wrought and unwrought materials, which at the present time astonish and gratify the world.

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF FURS.

A concise and historical account of Furs from the earliest ages, has, it is believed, never been presented to the public; sacred and profane history alike shew us that human beings in their first rude condition, formed garments for themselves from the skins of beasts, and yet this same material in ages of cultivation and civilization has been considered, under certain conditions, one of the most precious and costly of garments.

The oldest mention we have of skins occurs in the sacred writings, as we find reference to this fact in the book of Genesis.* “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them;† we next read of their use in the covering and the adorning of the Holy Temple; the goat skins dyed red, and the badger skins are particularly pointed out. The Persians, Greeks and Romans were familiar with their use as articles of clothing and trophies of victory, and imputed in many instances similar customs and usages to their numerous fabled Deities and Heroes.

Equally ancient was their use amongst the Assyrians, as is proved by finding them pourtrayed on those interesting and valuable sculptures lately rescued from oblivion, and bringing again to light the records of a great nation and mighty people, whose history otherwise might have been lost to us for ever. When we refer to more modern times, we find that the Regal Miniver encircles the Royal Diadem and composes the mantle by which the Sovereign on state occasions is distinguished, and that the various degrees in rank of our nobility are also known by the heraldic arrangements of the ermine worn by them on their robes of estate. In like manner the sable is used, according to the rank, to adorn the official dresses of our Civic Magistrates. The ermine, again, emblem in the olden time of purity, is worn by the Judges, and was possibly for that reason chosen as the adornment of their magisterial vestments. The rude Laplander, the uncultivated Esquimaux, and the wild Indian, in their several remote and inhospitable regions, have similar marks of distinction peculiar to themselves.

In the division of our subject will be found, as we proceed, a more particular reference to those people and nations by whom Furs have been known and used, with all that relates to their qualities, varieties, substitutions, and other particulars interesting to the general reader.

ENGLAND.

As regards this country, in introducing Furs and Skins to the notice of our readers, it may be as well to state that they were anciently of very high value; they were marks of distinction, according to the kinds worn. Rich Furs have been the friendly offerings of Princes to each other, and the tokens of grace and privilege to their favourites; in later days the use of Furs, as well as their variety and richness, became greatly extended. The

* Genesis c. iii, v. 21.

† Exodus c. xxvi, v. 14.

sumptuary laws confining their use to particular persons were stringent and severe; of late years these arbitrary laws have been in abeyance, and taste, fashion and utility have been the sole arbiters of their use. Till the discovery of the western hemisphere the Furs in use in this country were principally our own produce, but America soon introduced to us and the world those beautiful Furs which only arrive at perfection in high northern latitudes. In a few short notes the characteristic uses of each species are pointed out, and we also subjoin an authorized statistical table of the imports and exports of these valuable commodities. Those unacquainted with the mercantile relations connected with this article of commerce will doubtless feel surprised at the magnitude of the details.

Table of Imports and Exports.

	Total Importation into England.	Exported.	Consumed in England.
Raccoon	525,000	525,000	None.
Beaver	60,000	12,000	48,000
Chinchilla	85,000	30,000	55,000
Bear	9,500	8,000	1,500
Fisher	11,000	11,000	None.
Fox, Red	50,000	50,000	None.
„ Cross	4,500	4,500	None.
„ Silver	1,000	1,000	None.
„ White	1,500	500	1,000
„ Grey	20,000	18,000	2,000
Lynx	55,000	50,000	5,000
Martin	120,000	15,000	105,000
Mink	245,000	75,000	170,000
Musquash	1,000,000	150,000	850,000
Otter	17,500	17,500	None.
Fur Seal	15,000	12,500	2,500
Wolf	15,000	15,000	None.

European Furs.

	Imported.	Exported.	Cons.in England
Martin, Stone, and Baum....	120,000	5,000	115,000
Squirrel	2,271,258	77,160	2,194,098
Fitch	65,091	28,276	36,815
Kolinski	53,410	200	53,210
Ermine	187,104	None.	187,104

FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

A few remarks regarding the Fur-producing countries from which we derive our principal supply may not be uninteresting. The immense tracts of country over which the Hudson's Bay Company has controul, may be considered as vast hunting grounds and preserves, affording a varied and exhaustless supply. The wild and inhospitable character of these northern regions would proffer no inducement to human enterprise, had not Nature bountifully diffused over these otherwise barren climes a race of rare, interesting, and curious animals, eminently conducive both to the comfort and elegancies of civilized life. Although the increased ardour for investigation has caused rapid strides to be made in our knowledge, yet few are aware of the great extent of the territorial possessions of the Hudson's Bay Company, (an Association whose principal object is the collection of Furs) covering as they do nearly one-ninth of the habitable globe. Russia is next in order and importance in this respect, but with a different race of animals. The produce of North America and the Canadas has an equal preponderance in the scale. As we approach the Tropics and the warmer regions, the rich fine silky Fur with which the animals are clothed in the Northern climes disappears, and instead, Fur of a totally different character is met with, which, although splendid in appearance, is not adapted for warmth, comfort, or general use.

The Hudson's Bay Company's annual importation of Skins and produce is sold by Public Auction twice a year, in March and September, at their warehouse in Fenchurch Street, which sales are attended by merchants and dealers (who come for the express purpose) from the remotest parts of the world. In the olden time, in lieu of being disposed of by auction, they were sold by the candle, which was as follows: innumerable small lengths of wax candle or taper were prepared for the intended purpose; a tripod for the candles was placed on the long table surrounded by the buyers; as soon as lighted each lot according to the catalogue was put up, the biddings commenced and continued till the candle burnt out, and as it fell down the last bidder was declared the purchaser. The North American and Canadian Fur Sales were similarly conducted, till (at the commencement of the present century) with the improvements of modern times, the hammer usurped the place of the candle.

SPECIMENS OF SKINS

FROM

THE ARCTIC REGIONS,

BELONGING TO THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY,

SELECTED

FOR THE EXHIBITION,

From their Importation of 1851.

Prepared and Arranged by

J. A. NICHOLAY & SON, from No. 1 to No. 27.

1. Group of Black and Silver Foxes (*Vulpis fulvis*, var. *Argentatus*).
2. Group of Cross Foxes (*Vulpis fulvis*, var. *Decussatus*).
3. Ditto Red Do. (*Vulpis fulvis*).
4. Ditto White Do. (*Vulpis lagopus*).
5. Ditto Kitt Do. (*Vulpis velox*).

The black and silver fox is the most valuable of this tribe, a single skin producing from 10 to 40 guineas: they are generally purchased for the Russian and Chinese markets, being highly prized in these countries. The cross and red fox are used by the Chinese, Greeks, Persians, &c. &c., for cloak-linings and for trimming their dresses. The white and blue fox is used in this and other countries for ladies' wear. In the sumptuary laws passed in the reign of Henry III, the fox is named with other furs then in use. Some authors of eminence have stated, that the fox in the Arctic regions changes the colour of its fur with the change of the seasons: such is not the case, with the exception of the white fox, which is in winter a pure white, in summer a greyish tint. It has generally been believed and so stated by some eminent Naturalists, that the silver, cross, and red fox are distinct varieties, but a trader who often joined the American Indians in their trapping and hunting excursions informs the writer, that he has often seen all the varieties above named as cub foxes in the same litter, but the white fox is believed to be a distinct variety.

6. Group of Otter (*Lutra Canadensis*).

The Hudson's Bay North American and European otters are chiefly exported for the use of the Russians, Chinese, Greeks,

&c. &c., for caps, collars, trimming their national dresses, robes, &c. It may not be uninteresting to state, that upwards of 500 otters, the produce of Great Britain during the last year, were exported.

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7. Group of Beaver (*Castor Americanus*).

The beaver in former years was one of the Hudson's Bay Company's most valuable productions; but since its use has been almost entirely discontinued in the manufacture of hats, it has lost much of its value. Experiments have however been made, and are progressing satisfactorily, to adapt its fine and silky wool to weaving purposes. For ladies' wear, a most beautiful fur has been the result of the beaver being prepared by a new process, after which the surface is cut by a newly invented, ingenious and costly machine. In colour it is a rich brown, similar in appearance to the costly South Sea otter; superior in some respects, being exceedingly light, and combining cheapness with durability: it is sometimes dyed a dark brown, in which state its rich and quiet appearance is much admired. It is also exported in its prepared state for the use of the higher classes in Europe and the East. The rich white wool from the under part of the beaver produces at the present time a very high price, and is largely exported to France, where it is manufactured into those beautiful bonnets which are so fashionable and so much admired.

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8. Group of Lynx (*Felis Canadensis*).

9. Ditto Lynx Cat (*Felis Rufa*).

Both the above, when dyed, were formerly much used. Its rich silky, glossy appearance, justly caused it to be a great favourite; but the caprice of fashion at length banished it from this country. It is, however, still dyed, prepared and exported in large numbers for the American market, where it is much admired. In its natural state it is a greyish-white, with dark spots, and is used by the Chinese, Greeks, Persians and others, for cloaks, linings, facings, &c., for which purpose it is very appropriate, being exceedingly soft, warm and light. In the olden time the lynx was called the lucern.

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10. Group of Wolf (*Canis Occidentalis*).

11. Ditto Fisher (*Mustela Canadensis*).

12. Ditto Wolverin (*Gulo luscus*).

The wolves are generally used as cloak and coat linings in Russia and other cold countries by those who cannot afford the more choice kinds; also for sleigh coverings, and open travelling carriages. The other skins enumerated are principally used

for trimmings, linings, &c. The tail of the fisher is very valuable, and exclusively used by the Hebrew race.

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13. Group of Badger (*Taxidea Labradoria*).

The North American badger is exported for general wear; its soft, fine fur renders it suitable for that purpose. The European badger, on the contrary, from the wiry nature of its hair, is extensively used for the manufacture of the superior kinds of shaving brushes.

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14. Group of Martin or Sable (*Mustela martes*).

The Hudson's Bay martin or sable, principally used for ladies, is next in repute and value to the Russian sable, and is consumed in large quantities in this country, in France, and in Germany, &c.; the darkest colours are the most valuable, and the lighter shades are frequently dyed to imitate the darker varieties. The heraldic associations connected with the sable render it highly interesting both to the historian and the antiquary. In every age it has been highly prized. The lining of a mantle made of black sables with white spots, and presented by the Bishop of Lincoln to Henry I, was valued at 100*l*.—a great sum in those days. In Henry the Eighth's reign a sumptuary law confined the use of the fur of sables to the nobility above the rank of viscounts.

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15. Group of Mink (*Mustela vison*).

The mink is exclusively the produce of the Hudson's Bay possessions and North America; it is consumed in Europe in immense numbers, principally for ladies' wear: its rich glossy appearance, a rich brown colour (similar to the sable), combined with its durability and moderate cost, justly renders it a great favourite. The small fine dark mink is one of the most fashionable and admired furs in Paris; to which place it is extensively exported, and where it now commands a large price.

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16. Group of Musquash or Musk-rat (*Fiber zibethicus*).

The musquash, or large American musk-rat, is imported into this country in immense numbers: it was formerly much used in the manufacture of hats, but the introduction of the silk hat has entirely superseded its use. The musquash is now dressed in a superior way, and manufactured extensively for female wear, both in its natural and dyed state, and is a cheap, durable, and good-looking fur. This humble skin has been greatly exalted in character, and has been introduced to the public under every

name but its real one, and thousands who use it fancy they are possessed of sable, mink, or other real furs.

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17. Group of Weenusk (*Arctomys empetra*).

18. Ditto Swan (*Cygnus ferus*).

The swan, plucked of its feathers after it is dressed, leaves the beautiful skin, so well known as swansdown : it is made into various articles for ladies' use. The feathers, prepared and purified, are used for beds, and being the most durable and elastic, are particularly suited for that purpose. The Hudson's Bay swan quills are much in demand for pens and artists' brushes or pencils, and command a high price. A portion of the plumage is also used for ornamental and fancy purposes, and military plumes.

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19. Group of White Hare (*Lepus glacialis*)

The white hare from Russia and the Polar Regions is perfectly white in winter; in summer it changes to a greyish tint. It was formerly much used, in its pure white state, for ladies' cloak linings and other purposes, and as a substitute for the white fox; but the skin being so exceedingly tender, it has in consequence given way to the white Polish rabbit, which is more durable and suitable for that purpose. It is also dyed, and looks exceedingly rich, and is often palmed off to the inexperienced for superior and real furs.

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20. Group of Rabbits (*Lepus Americanus*).

The Hudson's Bay rabbit is one of the least valuable skins imported by this Company: like all furs from the Polar Regions, it is fine, long and thick, but the skin is so fragile and tender that it is almost useless; it is, however, dyed and manufactured for ladies' wear, and sold by unprincipled dealers under various names, and even often for sable, and to the great annoyance of the purchasers it soon breaks, the fur rubs off, and it falls to pieces.

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21. Group of Black Bear (*Ursus Americanus*).

22. Ditto Brown Bear (*Ursus*, var. *Americanus*).

23. Ditto Grey Bear (*Ursus feror*).

The large North American black bear is termed the army bear, because it is generally used for military purposes in this and other countries, for caps, pistol-holsters, rugs, carriage ham-mercloths, sleigh coverings, &c. The fine black cub bears are much sought after in Russia for making shube linings, coat-linings, trimmings and facings, &c., &c. The other sorts, with



the large grey bears, for sleigh coverings and accompaniments, &c. The white Polar bear, the supply of which is very limited, is generally made into rugs, which are often bordered with the black and grey bear. The brown or Isabella bear is at the present time used for ladies' wear in America. Forty years since, the Isabella bear was the most aristocratic and fashionable fur in England, a single skin producing from 30 to 40 guineas; but the caprice of fashion causes similar skins at the present time to produce not more than as many shillings.

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24. Group of Sea-otter (*Eutryda maritima*.)

The sea-otter is most sought after by the traders, on account of its value, a single skin producing from 20 to 40 guineas: it is said to be the royal fur of China, and is much used by the officers of state, mandarins, &c. It is in great esteem in Russia, and principally worn by gentlemen for collars, cuffs, facings, trimmings, &c., &c. On account of its great weight it is rarely used by ladies.

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25. Group of Swan Quills.

26. Ditto Goose Quills.

27. Ditto Isinglass in its natural state.

This specimen is in its original state; by a subsequent process it is prepared for domestic use.

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SPECIMENS OF SKINS FROM THE CANADAS,

Exhibited by J. A. NICHOLAY & SON.

28. Group of Raccoon (*Procyon lator*).

The finest raccoons are produced in North America, and are imported into this country in immense numbers. They are purchased here by the merchants who attend the periodical fur sales, and who dispose of large quantities at the great fair at Leipzig: they are principally used in Russia and throughout Germany, for lining shubes and coats, and are exclusively confined to gentlemen's wear. The dark skins are the choicest, and are very valuable.

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29. Group of Cat Lynx (*Felis Rufa*).

The lynx cat is mostly found in Canada, and is a distinct variety of the lynx species; it is exported, and made into cloak and coat linings, and is very suitable for cold climates, and very moderate in price.

30. Group of Mink (*Mustela vison*).

The North American mink is produced in great numbers in Newfoundland, Labrador, the Canadas, &c., &c., and is invariably the finest of the species; for uses see note to No. 15.

31. Group of Grey Fox.—(*Vulpis Virginianus*.)

The Virginian, or North American grey fox, is the produce of the Canadas, Newfoundland, Labrador, &c., and is at present much used for open-carriage wrappers, sleigh wrappers, coat and cloak linings, also for fur travelling-bags, foot-muffs, &c.; its exceedingly moderate price, warmth, and great durability, render it an especial favourite.

EUROPEAN FURS.

Selected for the Exhibition by NICHOLAY & SON,

FROM THEIR IMPORTATION OF 1851.

32. Group of Russian Sable (*Martes zibellina*).

The Russian or Siberian sable is one of the most costly furs, a single skin varying in price from three to ten guineas, and is manufactured into linings, which are generally used as presents by the Emperor of Russia, the Sultan, and other great potentates, being of the value of 1000 guineas and upwards, and is also manufactured for ladies' and gentlemen's wear, according to the prevailing fashion of the country. The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Sheriffs of the City of London have their robes and gowns furred with the sable, according to their respective ranks. The tail of the sable is also used in the manufacture of artists' pencils or brushes, being superior to all others. The tail of the sable makes very beautiful trimmings, which, together with muffs and boas of the same, are much prized. Russia produces about 25,000 of these valuable and esteemed skins annually. Naturalists have not yet decided whether this species is identical with that from North America, its fur being so much softer, finer, and longer than the latter.

33. Group of Stone Martin (*Martes albogularis*).

The stone martin is widely spread over Europe, and derives its name from the fact of its selecting rocks, ruined castles, &c., as its haunts. The fur in its natural state is soft and fine, and shades from a light to a dark-bluish grey, taking the colour of the rocks amongst which it is found. The throat is invariably a

pure white. The French excel in dying this fur, and it is in consequence termed French sable; it is extensively used in this country, and being a permanent colour, and so like the true sable, it is a great favourite.

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#### 34. Group of Baum Martin (*Martes abietum*).

The baum or wood martin is so named from its being invariably found in woods and pine forests in Europe. The fur in its natural state is similar to the North American sable, but coarser. It is distinguished by the bright yellow colour of its throat; when dyed, the fur is so like the real sable that it can scarcely be told from it.

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35. Group of Ermine (*Mustela erminea*).

The ermine is produced in most countries; but the best is from Russia, Sweden, and Norway, and is killed in winter when the fur is pure white (except the tail, with its jet black tip), it being at that season in its greatest perfection; in summer and spring it is grey, and of little or no value. It is the weasel of more southern climes.

The ermine is the royal fur of most countries. The Roman Pontiff and Cardinals, also, have their ecclesiastical robes, &c., adorned with capes and trimmings of ermine according to their ranks. In England at the coronation of the Sovereign, the miniver, as the ermine is styled in heraldic language, is used, being powdered, that is, studded with black spots; the spots or powdered bars on the miniver capes of the peers and peeresses, being in rows, and the number of rows or bars denoting their various degrees of rank. The sovereign alone and the blood royal having the miniver of the coronation robes powdered all over, which is a black spot inserted in about every square inch of the fur, crimson velvet being used on that occasion. The crown is also adorned with a band of miniver, with a single row of spots; the coronets of the peers and peeresses having a similar arrangement. The black spots are made of the black Astracan lamb. On state occasions, in the House of Lords, the Peers are arrayed in their robes of estate, of scarlet cloth and gold lace, with bars or rows of pure miniver, more or less, according to their degrees of rank; the Sovereign alone wearing the royal miniver, powdered all over. The Judges, in their robes of office, are clad in scarlet and pure ermine. The ermine, with the tail of the animal inserted therein, is used as articles of dress for ladies, in every variety of form and shape, according to the dictates of fashion, and also as cloak linings. The miniver can only be worn on state occasions by those who, by their rank, are entitled to its use; but as an article

of fashion for ladies' wear there is no prohibition. In the reign of Edward III, furs of ermine were strictly forbidden to be worn by any but the royal family, and its general use is prohibited in Austria at the present time. In mercantile transactions the ermine is always sold by the timber, which consists of forty skins. The miniver fur of the olden time was the white belly of the grey squirrel.

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36. Group of Kolinski (*Mustella Siberica*).

The kolinski or Tartar sable is procured from Russia; belongs to the weasel tribe, and is in colour a bright yellow: it is much used in its natural state, and also dyed to imitate the cheaper sables.

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37. Group of Squirrel, black (*Sciurus Niger*).  
 38. Ditto Squirrel, blue (*Sciurus*, var. *Niger*).  
 39. Ditto Squirrel, kazan (*Sciurus*, var. *Griseus*).  
 40. Ditto Squirrel, red (*Sciurus vulgaris*).

The squirrel abounds in Russia (where it is produced in the greatest perfection), in such immense numbers as would appear almost incredible; the importation from thence to this country alone, last year, exceeding 2,000,000. It is so well known that a description is unnecessary; and is manufactured entirely for ladies' and childrens' wear; for cloak and mantle linings it is particularly suitable, its moderate cost adapting it to general purposes. The celebrated Weisenfels linings deserve a remark, being made from the belly or white part of the dark blue squirrel, the exquisite workmanship and lightness being without parallel; (a full-sized cloak-lining weighing only twenty-five ounces), and are a favourite article: it is known as the *petit gris*. For colder climates the linings are made from the back or plain grey part of the squirrel, the best having part of the tail left on each skin. The lighter colours have been lately dyed, and introduced to imitate the expensive sables. The squirrel tail is made into the round boa and trimmings, purposely for the foreign market. It is also used for artists' pencils. We find the squirrel named in the sumptuary laws, in the reign of Henry III, and at the same period the miniver fur was the white part of the squirrel's belly. Russia produces about 23,000,000 annually.

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41. Group of Fitch or Pole-Cat (*Putorius fætidus*).

The above is so well known that it needs but little description. About forty years since it was one of the most fashionable furs; the richness of its colour (the top hair a jet black, the ground a

rich yellow), combined with its durability, caused a great consumption of this skin; but from its peculiar odour it was also called the foul marte, which probably has been the cause of its gradual disuse. It is produced in the greatest perfection in this country.

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- 42. Group of Crimea Grey Lamb.
 - 43. Ditto Ukraine Black Lamb.
 - 44. Ditto Astracan Black Lamb.
 - 45. Ditto Astracan Grey Lamb.
 - 46. Ditto Persian Black Lamb.
 - 47. Ditto Persian Grey Lamb.
 - 48. Ditto Spanish Lamb.
 - 49. Ditto Hungarian Lamb.
 - 50. Ditto English Lamb.

The grey and black Russian lamb is mostly used for gentlemen's cloak and coat linings, for facings, collars, caps, &c. &c., and also for army purposes. The Astracan lamb is a rich, wavy, glossy, black skin, extremely short in the fur, having the appearance of beautiful watered silk: in order to obtain this choice skin the parent sheep is destroyed a certain time before the birth of the lamb. The Persian, grey, and black lamb, is covered with the minutest curls possible; this is not a natural growth, but is caused by the animal being, as soon as born, sewn up tightly in a leathern skin, which prevents the curl expanding, and which is not removed till the desired curl is produced; from the means adopted both sorts are rather costly, and are used for gentlemen's wear and military purposes. The Hungarian lamb is produced in that country in immense numbers; of it the national coat, called the Juhasz Bunda, is made. In the summer, or wet weather, the fur or woolly part is worn outside; in winter, when warmth is required, it is reversed: the skin is tanned or dressed in a way peculiar to the country, and decorated and embroidered in accordance with the means and taste of the wearer. In Spain the lamb is used for the well-known and characteristic short jacket of that country, which is adorned with fillagree silver buttons; the coarser kinds of both colours are used for our cavalry, and are also employed for mounting and bordering skins, as leopards, tigers, &c., for ornamental and domestic purposes. In the reign of Richard II, the sergeant at law wore a robe furred inside with white lambskin and a cape of the same.

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- 51. Group of Perewaitzki.
 - 52. Ditto Hamster.

The above are from Russia; the former is used by ladies, the

latter is made into cloak-linings, which are exceedingly light, durable, and cheap.

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- 53. Group of Coloured Cat.
 - 54. Ditto Black Cat.
 - 55. Ditto Black Dutch.
 - 56. Ditto Coloured Dutch.

The cat, when properly attended to, and bred purposely for its skin, is a most useful and durable fur; in Holland it is bred and kept in a confined state till the fur is in its greatest perfection, and is fed entirely on fish. In other countries, and especially in our own, it is produced in large numbers. The wild cat is much larger and longer in the fur, and is met with in extensive forests, particularly in Hungary; the colour is grey, spotted with black, and its softness and durability render it suitable for cloak and coat linings, for which purpose it is much used. The black species is also much in request, and similarly used, and, with the spotted and striped varieties is made into wrappers for open carriages, sleigh coverings, and railway travelling.

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- 57. Group of English Rabbit, silver grey, (*Lepus cuniculus*); presented by Her Grace the Duchess of St. Albans.
 - 58. Group of English Black Rabbit (*Lepus* var.).
 - 59. Ditto English White Rabbit (ditto).
 - 60. Ditto English Grey Rabbit (ditto).
 - 61. Ditto Flemish Blue Rabbit (ditto).
 - 62. Ditto Polish White Rabbit (ditto).

The English rabbit, both in its wild and domestic state, abounds in such numbers that the supply is inexhaustible: it was formerly employed to make the felt bodies or foundation for the beaver hat; at present, not being used for that purpose, it is dressed, dyed, and manufactured in immense quantities into various useful cheap articles for the middle classes. The wool has recently been used in making a peculiar cloth, adapted for ladies' wear. The English silver grey rabbit was originally a breed peculiar to Lincolnshire, where great attention was paid to it. Warrens have since been formed in various parts of the country. It is in great demand in China and Russia, to which countries it is invariably exported, on account of the high price there obtained. The white Polish rabbit is a breed peculiar to that country, and is there made into linings for ladies' cloaks, being the cheapest and most useful article of fur for that purpose, and is imported in great numbers. The finer sorts of white rabbit are much used as substitutes for ermine; and when the real ermine tails are inserted therein, the

imitation is so perfect that it requires the practised eye of the furrier to detect the imposition. So late as the reign of Henry VIII, such importance was attached to the cony or rabbit skin that the charter of the Skinners' Company shows they were worn by nobles and gentlemen. Acts of Parliament were passed regulating their sale and exportation, which are still in existence, but in abeyance.

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63. Group of European Grey Hare (*Lepus timidus*).

The European grey hare, like the common grey rabbit, was formerly used to make the felt body for the beaver hat, but its use for that purpose is now very limited. It is dressed in a peculiar way, for the purpose of being worn as a protection to the chest, and is recommended by many of the faculty.

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Particular attention is invited by MESSRS. NICHOLAY AND SON to their improved method of dressing and preparing skins, which will be seen by the specimens exhibited to have been brought to great perfection.

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SEAL (*Phoca*).

64. Group of Seal, GEORGIA, SHETLAND ISLES, FALKLAND ISLES, LOMAR'S ISLAND, and CAPE.

65. Group of plucked and prepared Seal, natural colour.

66. Ditto plucked and prepared Seal, dyed.

67. Ditto Greenland and Newfoundland Seal.

68. Ditto Greenland and Newfoundland Seal, dyed.

69. Ditto spotted and silver Seal.

Is an inhabitant of most countries; it is found in the high northern latitudes in immense numbers; ships are purposely fitted out for its capture; the oil produced by the animal, together with its skin, renders it (connected as it is with the whale fishery) extremely important to the trader, and interesting to the naturalist. The skins are salted and packed in casks, in which state they are sent to this country; they are then sorted and selected for various purposes; those suitable for leather pass into the tanner's hands, and make a beautiful leather, which is used for ladies' shoes. The blue back, the hair, and the silver seal, are dressed and used in their natural state, and also dyed and exported in large quantities; their low price and durability cause them to be in great demand. The fur seal, the supply of which is always small compared with the other kinds, undergoes a process to prepare it for its intended use. It is brought at the present time to a degree of perfection pre-eminent in this country; when divested of the long coarse hair (which protects it in

its native element) there remains the rich, curly, silky, yellowish down, in which state it was formerly used for travelling caps and other purposes. It is now seldom made use of in that state, but dyed a beautiful Vandyke brown, giving it the appearance of the richest velvet, and is manufactured, in every variety of shape and form, as articles of dress for ladies', gentlemen's, and children's wear.

The dressing and preparing the seal, as effected by Messrs. Nicholay & Son expressly for articles of apparel, will be found on examination to be superior to anything ever yet produced in this or any other country. HER MAJESTY, H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT, and THE COURT, *have been graciously pleased to extend their patronage in its favour.*

### SOUTH AMERICA.

- 70. Group of Chinchilla, Buenos Ayres (*Chinchilla lanigera*).
- 71. Group of Chinchilla, Arica (*Chinchilla lanigera*).
- 72. Ditto Bastard Chinchilla or Lima (*Chinchilla lanigera*).

The chinchilla is exclusively a South American animal. Since its introduction into this country and France, about forty years since, it has continued to the present time a decided favourite and fashionable fur. Its extreme softness and delicacy confine it entirely to ladies' wear. It has lately been exported to Russia and Germany, where it is greatly admired. The bastard or Lima chinchilla is a short, poor fur altogether, very inferior to the other, and often to those who are not judges substituted for the superior kinds.

### THE TROPICS.

- 73. Group of lions (*Felis leo*).
- 74. Ditto Royal Tigers (*Felis tigris*).
- 75. Ditto Cape Tigers (*Felis leopardus Africanus*).
- 76. Ditto Leopards (*Felis leopardus*).
- 77. Ditto Panther (*Felis onca*).
- 78. Ditto Chétar.

In China, the mandarins cover the seat of justice with the tiger. In this country the collocation of the leopard under the officer's saddle is a distinguishing mark, adopted by some of Her Majesty's cavalry regiments. In Austria the small fine leopard is worn as a mantle by the Hungarian noblemen, who exclusively form the royal hussar body guard.

- 79. Group of Zebra (*Equus zebra*.)



80. Group of Antelope (*Antelope oreotragus*).
81. Ditto Black Monkey (*Colobus ursinus*).
82. Ditto Ant-eater (*Myrmecophaga jubata*).
83. Ditto Moose Deer (*Cervus alces*).
84. Ditto deer.
85. Ditto Australian (*Dasyurus viverrinus*).
86. Ditto Indian Ground Squirrel (*Sciurus palmarum*).
87. Ditto Flying Squirrel (*Sciurus pelaurus*).
88. Ditto Angora goat (*Capra hircus*).
89. Ditto dyed Angora Goat, various.

The Angora goat is produced in large numbers in Asia Minor, and is remarkable for its long, curly, rich, white silky coat; it was formerly a most costly and fashionable article of ladies' wear, but is at the present time of little value. It is dyed, and takes some of the most beautiful and brilliant colours. Its low price has caused it to be adapted to weaving purposes with success. It is made into very beautiful rugs for drawing rooms, carriages, &c., &c.

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90. Group of Beaver, prepared by a new process.

91. Ditto Beaver, dyed.

See note to No. 7.

## SPECIMENS

shewing the new method of preparing the Beaver previously noticed, thereby adapting it for ladies' wear and general use for home consumption and the foreign market. *Messrs. Nicholay & Son have been permitted to lay specimens before Her Majesty, who was graciously pleased to approve thereof.*

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92. Group of un-haired or pulled dyed Otter.

The pulled otter is manufactured by having the external or long hair pulled or stripped off, leaving the soft, fine wool or down underneath; it is then dyed and is ready for use.

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93. Group of dyed Lynx. See Note No. 8.

94. Ditto Penguin (*Spheniscus aptenodytes*).

95. Ditto grebe (*Podiceps cristata*).

The skin of an aquatic bird inhabiting most of the large lakes in Europe. The choicest specimens are from Geneva, Italy, and Holland. The feathers are of the richest white, having the appearance of polished silver, the plumage on the outer edge of the skin being a rich dark brown; it is used by ladies, and forms a most beautiful and aristocratic article of dress, and is worn as

trimmings for the trains of court and drawing room dresses, for muffs, cuffs, boas, &c., &c. It is very durable; the exquisite smoothness of the feathers prevents its soiling with wear.

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96. Specimen of swan feathers.

97. Ditto goose feathers.

98. Ditto eider down.

The bird from which the down is taken is found in large numbers in Iceland, Norway, Sweden, &c., &c. Its colour is dark grey, and its elasticity, lightness, and resistance to wet, are prominent amongst its other advantages; it is used for the inside stuffing of muffs. On the Continent, the well-known eider-down quilts are, on account of their lightness and warmth, considered indispensable to most bedrooms. The eider down is applied to wearing apparel; by being placed immediately under the lining, and quilted, it forms one of the lightest and warmest articles of dress both for ladies and gentlemen.

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The following specimens are entirely manufactured by Messrs. Nicholay and Son at their establishment from skins principally of their own importation.

- 99. Suit of Russia Sable.
- 100. Ditto Hudson's Bay Sable.
- 101. Ditto Sable tail.
- 102. Ditto Mink.
- 103. Ditto Chinchilla.
- 104. Ditto Grebe.
- 105. Ditto Sea Otter.
- 106. Ditto Siberian Squirrel, with tails.
- 107. Ditto Kolinski.
- 108. Ditto Minever.
- 109. Ditto Ermine.
- 110. Ditto Moleskin.
- 111. Ditto Natural Beaver.
- 112. Ditto Dyed Beaver.
- 113. Ditto Seal.
- 114. Ditto Swan.
- 115. Ditto Goosedown.

The last is the down of the goose, which is manufactured by being sewn on textile fabrics. It is a striking specimen of Irish industry, and has been patronised and sold in England extensively for the benefit of the Irish female poor, by whom it has been made up. The price, compared with the true swansdown, is very moderate. Being sewn upon cloth it can be washed; on

the contrary, the swan must be placed in the hands of the furrier when required to be cleaned.

116. Suit of English Silver-grey Rabbit: presented by Her Grace the Duchess of St. Alban's.

117. Suit of Black Monkey.

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FUR SEAL.

Most of the following articles, designed, manufactured and introduced by Messrs. Nicholay & Son, have never till the present period been publicly exhibited by them, and deserve the attentive consideration of all those interested in the development of British industry and skill. Nicholay & Son *have been honoured with the Royal Command to make dresses of the rich Fur Seal for Her Majesty and the Royal Children: H. R. H. Prince Albert also extends his patronage thereto by wearing a coat of the same material.*

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- 118. Fur Seal pardessus, dyed.
 - 119. Ditto paletot.
 - 120. Ditto paletot, trimmed Sable.
 - 121. Ditto paletot, trimmed Mink.
 - 122. Ditto paletot, trimmed Minever.
 - 123. Ditto paletot, trimmed Grebe.
 - 124. Ditto cloak, lined and trimmed Ermine.
 - 125. Ditto child's Ermine paletot.
 - 126. Ditto child's Seal paletot, trimmed Minever.
 - 127. Ditto child's Seal paletot, trimmed Mink.
 - 128. Ditto Polish envelope.
 - 129. Ditto child's paletot.
 - 130. Ditto child's jacket.
 - 131. Ditto gentleman's coat.
 - 132. Ditto young gentleman's coat.
 - 133. Ditto waistcoat, double-breasted.
 - 134. Ditto waistcoat, single-breasted.
 - 135. Ditto lady's bonnet.
 - 136. Ditto gentleman's stock.
 - 137. Ditto lady's hood.
 - 138. Ditto gentleman's coat, natural colour.
 - 139. Ditto waistcoat, single-breasted, natural colour.
 - 140. Ditto waistcoat, double-breasted, natural colour.
 - 141. Tartar Foal-skin, lady's pardessus; quite new design.
 - 142. Ditto gentleman's coat; ditto.

H. R. H. Prince Albert has been graciously pleased to patronize the Tartar foal by having a coat made of that skin by Messrs. Nicholay & Son.

143. Tartar Foal-skin waistcoat; quite new design.
144. Mink lady's pardessus.
145. Gentleman's coat, lined Fur Seal.
146. Ditto lined Sable, throat or gill.
147. Ditto lined Genet.
148. Gentleman's coat, lined Genet.
149. Ditto lined North American Grey Fox.
150. Gentleman's shube, lined Raccoon.
151. Ditto lined Black Bear.
152. Gentleman's coat, lined and quilted Eiderdown.
153. Fur gloves, ladies and gentlemen's.
154. Fur boots and shoes, ladies and gentlemen's.
155. Fur travelling caps, ladies and gentlemen's.
156. Fur coverings for open carriages and sleigh purposes.
- 156.*Buffalo robes or skins.

The buffalo is killed in immense numbers by the North American Indians, solely for the tongue, the skin, and the bosses; they have a peculiar method of dressing the skin with the brains of the animal, in which state it is always imported. It has of late years been much used in Europe and this country as a warm travelling wrapper, its moderate price placing it within every one's reach; and in the colder climates it is similarly used, also for sleigh wrappers, cloak and coat linings, &c. &c.

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157. North American Grey Fox carriage wrappers, various : outside of waterproof cloth.
 158. Black African Monkey ditto, outside of waterproof cloth.
 159. African Antelope ditto, outside of waterproof cloth.
 160. North American Black Bear ditto, outside of waterproof cloth.
 161. Foreign and English Cat ditto, various : outside of waterproof cloth.
 162. Silver-grey English Rabbit-skin ditto. The skins presented by the Duchess of St. Alban's.

FUR TRAVELLING BAGS, ETC.

163. Cloth travelling bag, lined and trimmed Bear.
164. Ditto lined Grey Fox.
165. Fur table-covers, various.
166. Cigar-cases, mounted in Fur.
167. Silver Seal game bag.
168. Fancy chair, covered with Silver Seal.
169. Ditto covered with Silver Seal.
170. Ditto covered Leopard.
171. Ditto covered natural fur Seal.

- 172. Library chair, covered Zebra.
- 173. Ditto covered Zebra.
- 174. North American Fox foot ottomans, mounted on Black Bear.
- 175. North American Fox, mounted as ornamental mats, rugs, &c.
- 176. Foot muffs, various.
- 177. Cloak and coat linings, various.
- 178. Ladies' needlework, mounted in Fur; unique.
- 179. Models of muffs, various.
- 180. Rein-deer hoofs and mitts, specimen of Canadian Indian embroidery and fur; presented by the Marquis of Worcester.
- 181. Eider-down quilt.
- 182. Swan-down puffs.

SPECIMENS OF NATURAL HISTORY,

Set up to illustrate the various Skins.

- 183. Lions, by favour of Mr. Meyer.
- 184. Group of Leopards, by favour of Zoological Society.
- 185. Ditto Ocelots, by favour of Zoological Society.
- 186. Arctic Wolf, by favour of Hudson's Bay Company.
- 187. Arctic Blue Fox, by favour of Hudson's Bay Company.
- 188. Group of Beavers, by favour of Hudson's Bay Company.
- 189. Ditto Otters, by favour of the Marquis of Worcester.
- 190. Ditto Polecats, by favour of Earl Nelson.
- 191. Ditto Fox, by favour of Marquis of Worcester.
- 192. Ditto Grebes, by favour of Marquis of Worcester.
- 193. Ditto Musquash, by favour of Hudson's Bay Company.
- 194. Ornithorhyncus, by favour of Mr. Ellis.

The last, a native of Australia, is one of the most extraordinary animals in nature. The skin is very much like the otter, and seldom exceeds 12 inches in length; the supply is very limited: it is the connecting link between the bird and beast, having the body of the animal, the bill of the duck, the claw of the beast, and the web-foot of the duck. The male is furnished with two powerful spurs on each hind leg, similar to the game cock. The female lays eggs, which she hatches, and then suckles her young brood, which extraordinary fact was not generally credited till some few years since specimens preserved purposely were brought to this country, and submitted to the late Sir H. Halford, who dissected them, and delivered a lecture thereon at the College of Physicians which established the fact. Many attempts have been made to bring them over alive, but without success.

195. Lynx, by favour of Hudson's Bay Company.
 196. Javanese Musk Deer.
 197. Group of Antelopes, by favour of Zoological Society.
 198. Group of Perewaitzka, by favour of Zoological Society.
 199. White Stone Martin, by favour of Mr. George Smith.
 200. White Siberian Squirrel, by favour of Mr. George Smith.
 201. European Hare and Polar White ditto.
 202. Head and fore-paws of Royal Tiger, of extraordinary size and beauty.
 203. Model of a Peeress, in her coronation robes of estate.
 204. Ladies' Cloaks, lined squirrel lock, trimmed with grey Siberian squirrel with tails.
 205. Lady's Walking Paletot, lined fur.
 206. Lady's Travelling Cloak, lined fur.
 207. Muff and boa made of the down from the feathers that form the military and state plume, known as the aigrette, which are procured from the bird called the egret. The costly nature of the material is such, and its rarity so great, that three other sets only have been made during the present century, viz., for the Empress of Russia, for the Duchesse De Berri, on her marriage, and for Madame Adelaide, sister of Louis Phillippe. Manufactured by Monsieur Ray, Paris, for Messrs. Nicholay & Son, price 160 guineas.
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208. Group of Russian sables.
 209. English Badger, by favour of the Marquis of Worcester.
 210. Group of heads, rare specimens from Central Africa, by favor of Captain Bates.
 211. Two English Swan skins, by favor of Earl Nelson.

APPENDIX.

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No. 1.

In the reign of Edward the 3rd, Furs of ermine and lettice were strictly forbidden to be worn by any but the Royal Family, other expensive Furs were permitted only to Knights and Ladies whose income exceeded 400 marks annually.

Richard the 3rd, the day before his Coronation, rode from the Tower to Westminster in a long gown of purple velvet furred with ermine; and on the day of his Coronation he wore two sets of robes, one of crimson velvet furred with miniver fur, the other of purple velvet furred with ermine. Anne, his Queen,

wore the day before her Coronation a kirtle and mantle of white cloth of gold, furred with ermine. Her Coronation robes were like the King's, crimson and purple velvet furred with miniver and ermine. Elizabeth, the day before her Coronation, also wore a mantle of white cloth of gold damask, furred with ermines.

In the reign of Edward the 4th, all under the estate of Lords, except they were Knights of the Garter, were forbidden to wear Furs of sables, and the richer Furs were forbidden to any persons who were not in the enjoyment of forty pounds yearly.

In the reign of Henry the 8th, a sumptuary law was passed, confining the use of the furs of black genetis to the Royal Family, furs of sables to the nobility above the rank of Viscounts. Furs of martins were forbidden to all persons possessing less than 200 marks per annum. The commonality were confined to Lamb's fur only.

NO. 2.—ROYAL ROBES.

The Coronation and Parliamentary Robes of the Sovereigns of this country have been exceedingly varied, and although nominally made under Heraldic superintendence, are in reality made according to the taste and will of the wearer. Those of George the 1st, 2nd and 3rd, were quiet and unostentatious; on the contrary, those of George the 4th, made in a new style under his own immediate superintendence, were splendid and gorgeous in the extreme; the quantity of gold used in the ornaments and also in embroidering the material was so great, the length of the train alone being upwards of eight yards, being lined throughout with the finest miniver, combined with the richness of the velvet, caused them to be so heavy and cumbrous that His Majesty nearly fainted when he wore them, the fatigue was so great. Their cost was unparalleled, and the items thereof were severely scrutinized in Parliament before the grant was passed for their payment; a short time after his death they were disposed of in the most ignominious way possible, and the once splendid robes of one of the greatest Monarchs now adorn his effigy in the well known wax-work exhibition, where they now prove an attractive feature. The robes of the succeeding Monarch and his Queen were of a far different kind to the preceding ones, and H. M. Queen Victoria, although splendid and becoming her exalted station, are of a fitting character and worthy of a constitutional Sovereign, who not only reigns but lives in the hearts of her people. The Royal Robes are composed, one of purple and the other of crimson velvet, lined throughout with miniver and trimmed with gold lace, the purple one being the robe of estate, and after the Coronation becomes the perquisite of the Master or Mistress of the Robes; the crimson one, being the Parliamentary Robe, is ever afterwards used on

state occasions. It may not be generally known that the coffins of all the Royal Family are covered with crimson velvet, except the Sovereign, in whose case purple velvet is invariably used.

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*Extracts from Public Journals.*

No. 3.—HUDSON'S BAY.

"The greater portion by far of our furs come through the Hudson's Bay Company, and the trade differs from every other in the world.

"More than 180 years since Charles II, granted to Prince Rupert and others a vast extent of territory in North America, stretching along the coast from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific, and how far inland is best expressed by saying that it includes all the land with the exception of Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and a little strip of Russian possessions, from the North Pole to the boundaries of the United States. The region is, with the rare exception of the Company's station as wild now as when King Charles's grant was made; no forests have been cleared, no roads made, no colonies planted, the whole forms a vast hunting ground, a preserve for such vermin and wild beasts as nature has wrapped in coats of thick, soft, warmth-preserving fur. The whole number of persons employed by the Company amounts to four or five thousand, and those on the spot are all natives of the Orkneys. The animals, however, are trapped and hunted entirely by the American Indians, who in the spring time bring in to the several stations the produce of their winter's toil and cunning, and barter the furs for arms, ammunition, blankets, knives, hatchets, and their ever favourite tobacco. Money never passes; but until 1822, when the union of the Hudson's Bay and North Western Companies took place, rum and brandy were always a large item in the exchanges, and served during a long period to thin the native Indian races. The supply of different kinds of furs from various causes fluctuates greatly. The martin, or real sable skins, imported from Columbia river in 1848 exceeded 29,000, in 1849 23,000, in 1850 13,000, and in the present year have fallen to 11,377; and from other parts by the Company in the same years were, in round numbers, 54,000, 26,000, and 25,000. Sometimes a fire raging through the woods for miles destroys multitudes of animals; sometimes an unusual severity or continuance of frost cuts millions off; or some sickness seizes whole species; or the Indian hunters are themselves the subject of some epidemic that unfits them for a portion of the season for the field: it does not, however, appear that any general decrease or decay of any of the fur giving animals has taken place."—*Illustrated London News*, June 21st, 1851.

## No. 4.—LEATHER, SKINS, FUR, AND HAIR.—CLASS 16.

“Messrs. Nicholay and Son, 82, Oxford-street, furriers to her Majesty, Prince Albert, and the Court, exhibit a great variety of skins and manufactured articles in furs, &c. Their collection is of the most extensive, varied, and interesting character, comprising innumerable specimens from all parts of the world. Indeed the *Illustrated Catalogue* describes no less than seventy groups of skins from the arctic regions to the tropics, exclusive of the twenty-seven groups intrusted to the superintendence and arrangement of Messrs. Nicholay and Co. for the Exhibition, by the Hudson’s Bay Company. Their improved method of dressing and preparing skins, as evinced in the above specimens, shews that such process has been brought to great perfection in this country. In this collection are numerous samples of the rich fur seal, which are of a very important and striking character; the design, style, and workmanship is highly superior, and for the most part has never (till the present period) been publicly exhibited. This portion certainly deserves the attention of all those interested in the development of British industry and skill, and is generally much noticed and admired by the various visitors. This material is patronised by her Majesty and Royal Consort, and of which dresses have been manufactured by command of her Majesty for the Royal children. Some of the samples in colours are of a beautiful vandyke brown, and have a surface like the richest velvet, combined with great softness and durability. The rest of the collection comprises ladies’ cloaks, mantles, dresses, &c., many of which are trimmed with the choicest and richest furs, with bonnets, gentlemen’s coats, waistcoats, children’s dresses, &c.”—*Morning Paper*, June 21, 1851.

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No. 5.—RUSSIAN FURS.

In the *Times* of June the 9th, 1851, the arrival of the Russian furs is announced by stating, “that they,” the Russians, “have sent such specimens which must make Mr. Nicholay tremble for his laurels.” And again, in the *Times* of the 13th we find them thus described: “the Queen and Prince Albert examined the objects in the Russian department; they also greatly admired the imperial fur cloak, valued at 3,400*l.*, which is exhibited in the north gallery of the nave, and is made of small pieces taken from the neck of a species of fox; the quality of the pile being peculiarly limp and delicate.”

Whilst these remarks were in progress the above circumstances occurred, which caused the following letter to be sent to the *Times*, which appeared in that paper June the 17th, 1851:—

RUSSIAN FURS.

To the Editor of the Times.

"Sir,—The interest excited by the history of the furs just received at the Exhibition, giving the estimated value of the imperial pelisse of black fox, belonging to the Emperor of Russia, at 3,400*l.*, numbers of the nobility and others have requested my opinion as to the correctness of the statement. I therefore feel myself called upon publicly to say that, although not wishing to make any remark to disparage or detract from the value given thereto; but as a dealer and manufacturer, I have no hesitation in challenging not only Russia, but the world, to give me the opportunity, and I engage to produce a much superior article for less than 1000*l.*, which shall be made of the pure black arctic fox, specimens of which, belonging to the Hon. the Hudson's Bay Company, are exhibited under my superintendence (in class 16); also similar fine skins from Nova Scotia and Halifax. The Emperor's pelisse is made entirely of the necks of the silver fox, which part alone is black in that variety. Noticing its peculiar brown colour I made inquiries, and was informed it was made in 1802, which accounts for it; and possibly the value was placed on it at the same time. It may not be uninteresting here to state that the black and silver foxes are principally produced in the territories belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, also in North America and the Canadas; and are imported here, where they are purchased at our annual fur sales expressly for the Russian market; but being a prohibited article in that country, they are smuggled in as opportunity offers. The celebrated black fox lining (which was a choice specimen) presented to his late Majesty George IV, by the late Emperor Alexander, and eventually the property of the late Queen Dowager, has been for many years under my care for preservation, the estimated value of which was 1,000*l.* As regards the Russia sable lining, which is the exclusive produce of that country, I have no remark to make. The Russian Commissioner insists it is not their best, and regrets that their merchants have not come forward to represent their country as they could and ought to have done. M. Kaminski and his colleague have done their best; and I feel bound to state that those gentlemen have exerted themselves and done all they could to place their country in the highest and best position possible. The world, and also Russia, is indebted to their Emperor, in coming forward so nobly, and sending his own private property to represent that country. Had the Exposition been better understood, Russia would have stood out prominently, as her capabilities are as great as her resources are boundless.

J. A. NICHOLAY,

82, Oxford-street."

Furrier to Her Majesty and the Court.

Times, June 17, 1851.

No. 6.—ENGLISH FURS.

“A good deal of extrinsic interest has been added to the fur section in the Crystal Palace by the fact of the Emperor of Russia having condescended to send over his own pelisse, composed entirely of the skin of the black fox, to add to the attractions of the Exhibition. This act of condescension on the part of his imperial majesty has been looked upon in the light of a sort of challenge by the English furriers, and accordingly one of the most eminent among them, Mr. Nicholay, of Oxford-street, has publicly offered to produce a better pelisse than any in the Russian cabinet; and at a third of the price, that is to say for 1000*l.* instead of 3000*l.*, the value set on the St. Petersburg pelisse. A visit to that portion of the nave in which our British fur trade has conspicuously arranged its wares, will convince the most sceptical that Mr. Nicholay has not spoken without book, but that our English furriers, having the command of the best market for selection of skins, have also attained the greatest perfection in dressing these costly and beautiful adjuncts to male and female attire. It may be necessary to remind the reader, that the greater portion of the more costly furs is supplied by the Hudson's Bay Company and the North American Company, both of which have their hunting grounds in the most northern part of the American continent, and who bring the produce to London, where, on sales occurring twice or three times a year, the furriers of the whole world, Russian among the rest, supply themselves; and it is but reasonable to suppose that the London furriers, residing on the spot and having the wealthiest people in the world for their customers, would not be behind any competition in the preparation of articles of the greatest costliness and beauty. To prove that such is actually the fact, it is only necessary to examine the specimens of the skins of almost every animal, from the royal lion and Bengal tiger down to the domestic rabbit, with which the fur section in the Crystal Palace is profusely filled. The greatest show in quantity, and surpassed by none in quality, is the stand of Mr. Nicholay. He has hung the whole front of the gallery with the skins of lions, tigers, bears, wolves and foxes, dressed to a beautiful softness, and adapted to a modern exigency by being formed into open carriage, sleigh and railway wrappers. It appears that they surpass all other articles of that description in warmth and comfort, and although considerably more expensive than woollen wrappers in the first instance, yet, from their great durability, they become eventually the most economical wrapper for any one who travels much by open carriage or rail. Another novel adaptation of fur by the same firm, and exhibited in the same place, is a table cover of wild cat skins, admirably fitted,

from their softness, for library tables, when the preservation of expensively-bound books may be an object of importance. In the cases below, Mr. Nicholay exhibits specimens of almost every variety of fur adapted to almost every male and female habiliment. The beautiful lustre of the seal-skin, dyed and undyed, is shown to advantage in mantles, *par-dessus* children's dresses, bonnets, coats and waistcoats; the latter invaluable for winter wear as a preservation against bronchial affections. In the case of these latter, as in that of the buffalo-skin railway wrapper, great durability compensates for a trifling increased outlay in the first instance. The historical miniver may be seen in a great variety of muffs and tippets, with spots made with the paws of the Astracan lamb, to suit the requirements of modern taste. A very curious article in this valuable collection is a coat made from the hide of a Tartar colt, but so carefully dressed as to be as soft as seal-skin, and, from the fineness and density of the hair, completely impervious to wet. It is not a little curious to find the skin in which a wild Tartar colt once scampered over his native steppes, serving, perhaps, as a paletôt to some tranquil commercial gentleman economically travelling in an English second-class railway carriage. The beaver is also exhibited in a great variety of ladies' articles. Formerly the use of this fur in the manufacture of hats rendered it so dear as to make it quite unapproachable for any other purpose; but since the great "gossamer" revolution, the market has become much more easy, and the manufacture has been in a great measure handed over to the furrier. It dresses beautifully, has fine colour and lustre, and the density of the pile gives it a very rich and costly appearance. In our estimation it is one of the handsomest of furs, although far from being the most costly. But it is not only the skins of wild animals that the furrier applies to the purposes of his trade. In this collection are exhibited some beautiful articles in the skin of the grebe, a wild duck, found near the lake of Geneva, and a very costly and beautiful suit made from the feathers of the egret, a small bird, and so rare and expensive as only to be attainable by royal wearers. This costly collection is completed by various specimens of wolves, tigers, &c., carefully stuffed, and adding greatly to the attractiveness of the stand. Her Majesty has visited Mr. Nicholay's stand more than once, and commended many of the articles, especially a very handsome hearthrug, composed of a centre piece of wild cat skin, with a border in exquisite needlework, and a deep fringe composed of the skins of the black African monkey. The Hudson's Bay Company also exhibit some costly furs in this section: among others some skins of the black fox (the material of the Emperor's pelisse), valued at sixty guineas a-piece, some

silver fox skins, and various specimens of red fox and sea otter skins, the latter prepared carefully for the Russian and Chinese markets. It may here be observed that many of the furs manufactured in Russia are purchased in the London market, so that under any circumstances we may claim a considerable share in any celebrity enjoyed by their specimens; but our furriers contend, that not only in the choice of skins, but in the mode of preparing them, the English trade has nothing to fear from foreign competitors. There are specimens from various other makers in this section, but the greater portion of them have been already noticed apropos of visits paid by her Majesty, and the remainder do not require special notice. We must not omit, however, some mention of the British furs, consisting of hare, rabbit, and cat skins. It is a curious fact that they are prepared chiefly for the American market, the people there preferring them, from their cheapness, to the more costly furs in their own country. These last are exhibited by Messrs. S. and M. Meyer, Bow-lane, City." (*Exhibition Express and Daily News*, July 14th, 1851.)

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#### No. 7.—TO PRESERVE FURS.

A few hints regarding the preservation of furs may perhaps be acceptable. They should never be put away for the summer and forgotten, as they so frequently are. Their greatest enemy is damp and moth: if the wearer should be exposed to damp or rain they should always be dried at a moderate distance from the fire; when put by after winter use, to preserve them from moth, they should be closely packed in linen, and small articles in brown paper, previously having undergone a smart beating with a small cane, and an ordinary comb passed through in the direction of the hair. During the summer season they should be examined at least once a month, and at each time undergo the operation of beating. By the adoption of these simple and plain rules their preservation may be depended upon. Various substances have from time to time been proposed as preservatives against moth, but experience has proved their utter uselessness—cedar drawers, camphor and other articles, though highly extolled, cannot be depended upon; those that might prove really useful, such as arsenical, mercurial and other powerful preparations, are deleterious to the health of the wearer and destructive to the skin, the fur of which it is intended to preserve from the ravages of the moth. Large skins for ornamental purposes in constant use are best preserved by occasional beating. All furs, on their arrival in this country, should be immediately dressed, as it materially assists in their preservation, and defends them from the ravages of a small insect that preys on the skin.

Should the owners of furs and skins be going abroad, leaving town, or from any other circumstance, unable to pay the necessary attention to them, it is respectfully intimated that furs of every description, Coronation and Parliamentary robes, are preserved at Messrs Nicholay's establishment at a trifling annual charge.

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No. 8.—THE FUR TRADE.

The fur trade, when the sumptuary laws were in operation, was a very limited one, and in those times was principally in the hands of our own countrymen, who carried on their trade or mystery (as it was then termed) under the stringent and numerous regulations of the Skinners' Company, whose various charters gave them full and ample power to make rules and by-laws, by which it appears that no person was permitted to carry on the mystery of furrier, or employ any workman who had not served an apprenticeship of seven years thereto; and competent persons were selected and appointed by the company to see the work properly done, and no furs were permitted to be sold, or skins exported, till they had been inspected, in order that no inferior or second-hand furs were palmed off to the public as genuine or good that were not so, and that the fair fame and the high character of the English merchant should be preserved, and not injured by improper skins being exported for other than what they were. According to Malcolm, we find at the beginning of the present century a great change had taken place: the Company ceased to exercise their privileges, and the trade was principally in the hands of foreigners, who are described as expert and cunning workmen. At the present period the business is carried on by Englishmen and foreigners in equal proportions, the workmen employed being mostly foreigners. An immense trade is carried on by the wholesale City houses, who manufacture not only for Great Britain, but export largely to every part of the world. The retail houses, whose trade is much more limited, use the choicest skins, and employ first-rate artificers, as theirs is confined to home consumption and orders. The dressing is done entirely in the suburbs of London; the same remark applies to the dying, and both branches at the present time are brought to very great perfection. By referring to the statistical table* shewing the quantity of skins consumed in England, an idea will at once be formed of the magnitude of the fur trade, which is almost entirely confined to London, and which appears still to be on the increase.

* Page 5, Table of exports and imports.

